

MR. BALFOUR ON CYCLING.

The Most Civilising Invention of Our Time.

Mr. Balfour is not only an enthusiastic cyclist, but he is quite as enthusiastic a cyclist, and at the annual dinner in London of the National Cyclists' Union—a body of which he is president—he spoke in glowing terms of the pastime not merely as a luxury, but almost as a necessity for Londoners.

In the House of Commons he was busy steering the London Government Bill through its second reading, and when he dropped in for a few minutes among his fellow cyclists he not inappropriately referred to that measure and to the sport of which he is a votary as both tending to one object—the solution of problems presented by the aggragation of vast populations.

"After all," he said, "we have to recognize the fact that the urban populations of these small islands are destined to grow, and that rural areas are, to some extent at all events, destined to diminish by the fact that urban areas eat into them.

"That is inevitable. It is a condition of national prosperity and national growth, and the danger accompanying it is that we shall have in our crowded cities, and notably most of all in the

Greatest Of All Cities, a large population who, by the circumstances of their life, are absolutely deprived of any personal knowledge or experience of the joys of country life and the beauty of country scenery.

"From this, I think, cycling has saved us. I do not believe that I am exaggerating when I say that the grandfathers and great-grandfathers of their business kept them within the area of London at a time when London was but a small fraction of what it is now—had, nevertheless, fewer opportunities than we have to get out of London rapidly on our holidays—they were brief or long—and enjoy by means of the cycle a breath of country air, a view of country scenery, a knowledge of the splendours of the magnificence, which English scenery presents to us, and which our grandfathers themselves never possessed.

"If that be so—and I speak to men who are capable of saying of their own experience whether this is so or not—then I say that there has been no more civilizing invention in the memory of the present generation than the invention of the cycle. (Cheers.)

"Open to all classes, enjoyed by both sexes and by all ages, the cycle gives health, it gives us variety, it is less dependent upon external circumstances upon pecuniary means, upon preliminary organization, than almost any other sport with which I am acquainted. (Cheers.) I should say that any sport with which I am acquainted. (Cheers.)

These are Great Qualities. These are qualities which are spreading the use of the cycle wider and wider among all classes of the community.

"A friend on my right has just informed me that six vice-chancellors of Cambridge have been or are to be in immediate succession, all without exception are cyclists. (Cheers.)

"It perhaps somewhat detracts from that laudation, that praise, to add the fact, which he also communicated to me, that one of those officers was prevented from fulfilling his functions as vice-chancellor for three months by a bicycle accident. (Laughter.) Those things will occur. (Laughter.)

"Probably many of us—certainly I have suffered from them. (Laughter.) But it has not diminished our love of cycling, or our belief that cycling has all the merits which its innumerable votaries now believe it to possess.

Mr. Balfour next went on to refer to the work of the National Cyclists' Union.

"We have been organizing ourselves," he said, "and in doing so we have in every direction furthered the

Interest of Individual Cyclists who if they had remained individual cyclists would have been perfectly powerless to deal with the important forces opposed to them. (Cheers.)

"I am not going to enumerate what we have done in the matter of railway fares, for it is possible that there are directors present—(laughter)—and I should not like to hurt their feelings. But to put the side of our operation altogether out of account, there is no doubt that the comfort of cyclists, the safety of cyclists, the roads on which cyclists travel—(cheers)—have been infinitely improved by the efforts of this union.

"I do not speak of what we have done in the matter of organizing cycle sports, for that is a subject which I know only by literature—and of which I have no personal experience. (Laughter.) But we have done more in this country than we have done in any other country which they are capable unless they are in the charge and keeping of some amateur society wholly unaffiliated by the law, motives, which both influence other societies and who have the charge and responsibility for framing and enforcing those rules under which the sports in which our nation so greatly delights are carried on." (Cheers.)

SUPERIORITY OF THE BRITISH NAVY.

If experience at sea under all kinds of weather is to prove a valuable factor in the next great naval war, then the British navy has the advantage of every other navy in the world. The mere ordinary relief of 200 war vessels of all kinds at present in commission, and spread over every quarter of the globe, is an aggregate an enormous amount of cruising through calms and storms, or steaming from cold climates to hot and vice-versa. Out of this experience has come the prevalent British practice of having all warships good sea-boats, and from this has followed, at first perhaps unconsciously, but now as a carefully-studied art, the designing of war vessels to be good gun platforms in fair weather or foul. An observer who saw the British and French fleets meet in mid-channel in 1895, as recorded in the *Star* of Russia, who was then visiting the principal countries in Europe, says that the British ships were as steady in the choppy sea as if they had been riding in a land-locked harbor, while the French ships danced about so much that many of the officers and men were palpably seasick. Now men who are seasick are almost as much hors-de-combat as if they were severely wounded. On

the other hand (says Mr. Mullin in *Cassier's Magazine* for March), a warship may be a good sea vessel, and yet, owing to the low elevation of her guns, may not be able to use them in a storm.

Lieutenant W. E. Eberle, U.S.N., has said that the United States battleship Oregon, which proved herself to be an excellent sea boat, could not have fought any of her 13-inch guns during a gale, or for hours afterward, and could have fought her 8-inch guns only at intervals in rough seas. This argument in favor of the high freeboard in the *Majestic* and *Campus* classes is apparently irresistible. In practice shooting, made to resemble service conditions as nearly as possible, the British navy attains an average of 30 per cent. of effective hits, but no one expects this average to be maintained during the excitement of an action. If the Olympia had maintained this average at Manila she would have made absolutely effective hits, or enough to have destroyed the whole Spanish fleet single-handed. It is, therefore, in the opinion of Sir William White and his fighting chiefs at the admiralty, not so much a matter of practical difficulty to keep more than a certain number of guns supplied. It is to Sir William White's credit that amidst all the mechanical complications of the modern warship, he never lost sight of the fact that without men a warship was merely a costly lump of steel. Quick-firing guns, light and heavy, well dispersed, and each with a wide angle of fire; ample protection for the crew; abundant supply of ammunition, coal, and supplies; a good gun platform in rough as well as fine weather—these were the qualities realized by him in the *Majestic*, and these have made her a favorite type for imitation by naval architects of other nations.—*St. James's Gazette*.

THE SIEGE OF TYRE.

Alexander's Only Sea-Fight and Its Momentous Results.

Prof. Wheeler's popular *Life of Alexander the Great* comes before the public at a time when special interest is felt in the art of war. In the April number of the *Century* he gives a vivid description of the taking of Tyre and the destruction of the Phoenician power in the Mediterranean.

The one hour's battle in the harbor which resulted in the destruction of the besieged city's fleet, was the last dying struggle of the Phoenician power in the Mediterranean, and it was Alexander's only sea-fight. He made on land his conquest of the sea. With nothing longer to fear from the Tyrian fleet, the besiegers now more boldly than ever pushed their attacks upon the walls. The engines on the end of the mole still made poor headway against the massive walls which these confronted them; the walls at the northeastern corner proved equally invulnerable against the transport engines concentrated there; but a weak spot was found one day in the southern wall hard by the "Egyptian harbor." A narrow breach was opened, and an attack was made by a storm-party, only, however, to be sharply repulsed. The breach had been made on too small a scale. The Tyrians hurried to cover the breach from within, but the vulnerable spot had been found, and Alexander awaited only the opportunity of fair weather to send to renew the onslaught and this time to support it by a general attack at every available point in the circuit of the wall.

On the third day the opportunity came. The main attack was directed against the southern wall. Here the engines were used, and a wide, yawning gap. The moment their work was complete two great ships crowded with armed men pushed their way in to displace the engine-transports. In one was Alexander himself and the light galleys called the hypaspides, whom Admetus commanded; in the other were picked men from the phalanx. Long bridges like gang-planks were thrown across from the decks to the debris of the ruined wall. In an instant they swarmed with hurrying men. Admetus was the first to reach the wall, and, transfixing with a spear, was the first to die. Sharp and bitter was the struggle. From a handful the Phoenicians strove to secure a hand-to-hand fight. They fought to avenge their slain captain, and the presence of their king inspired them. The Tyrians fought for the last hope of their homes. Never before had foe met his foe on the island soil of Tyre. Some scrambled up the ruin and gained the battlements of the wall at the right; others followed, and with them Alexander, at the head, pushed on along the rampart platform toward the north till reaching the palace, which communicated with the wall, they found a way down by its stairways into the heart of the city.

Meanwhile the city had been attacked on every side. Vessels equipped with artillery were sent to close range under the walls, and poured their fire in upon the defenders of the walls, distracting their attention and dividing the defense. Simultaneously also the entrance of land forces and the presence of the king and the Tyrian ships scattered, scattered, driven ashore. From the northern harbor, where the defense was weaker, the approaches to the city had

been captured, and here a force of artillery entered to join those now pouring out through the palace doors into the narrow alleys of the town. The Tyrians, who had now forsaken the wall, rallied for their last stand before the shrine of Astarte, and here the battle resolved itself into massacre.

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